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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EINV](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT YAR'ADUA ON: PFIZER AND AFRICOM

Classified By: Ambassador Robin Sanders for Reasons 1.4 (b, c, & d).

¶1. In a short phone call to Ambassador late January 21 just prior to his departure for the Davos Summit in Switzerland, Nigerian President Yar'Adua made the following points on next steps on Pfizer and his position on AFRICOM and a possible visit to Nigeria by the AFRICOM Combatant Commander (COCOM).

¶2. Pfizer: The President said he had spoken to the Governor of Kano last week on the issue, and urged an amicable solution as well as resolution to the issues surrounding Pfizer. He said he encouraged dialogue between parties and asked that the Kano Governor share these thoughts with the Kano Attorney General. In addition, Yar'Adua said he had spoken with the Federal Attorney General (AG) Aondoakaa and urged the same thing, stressing an amicable resolution. He also said that he had instructed the Federal AG to meet with the Ambassador soonest, preferably week of Jan 21-Jan 25 to begin the dialogue which in turn would determine who, in addition to the Federal AG, would be the best and most useful contact with Pfizer for the continuing dialogue. The Ambassador noted that she appreciated the President's engagement and she stands ready to meet with Aondoakaa at the earliest opportunity. (Note: we have since heard through British sources that Aondoakaa is likely out of the country or traveling soon, so we do not anticipate a meeting with the Federal AG this week, but will continue to follow-up with his office. end note)

¶3. AFRICOM: Given that post had received a query regarding a possible upcoming visit to Nigeria from the AFRICOM COCOM within the next month, Ambassador took advantage of the President's January 21 phone call to raise the possibility of a visit to Nigeria and meeting with him for AFRICOM COCOM given his positive statements about AFRICOM during his recent Washington trip in December 2007. The Ambassador noted that she recognized the public and political fallout from his Washington comments, that had reached shrill proportions in Nigeria, but said that forward movement would be best as this was an important cornerstone in the way ahead on US-Nigerian relations. The President agreed that there was good synergy on areas of common interest with AFRICOM and that he still supported these areas of synergy, but that it was better to wait on a visit and he would come back to the Ambassador when he thought it would be appropriate to meet with the AFRICOM COCOM. In a subsequent Jan 23 meeting between visiting DAS Moss and Nigerian National Assembly Speaker Bankole, the latter also echoed support for synergies with AFRICOM especially on Niger Delta related technical support, but also noted that the time was not right to push for more Nigerian political support for AFRICOM until some additional political building blocks were in place so that Nigerians understood the benefits of AFRICOM.

¶4. Comment: Yar'Adua, without explicitly walking back from

his positive Washington statements on AFRICOM, was clear that he wanted to determine when a visit would work best. It has taken almost two months for Yar'Adua comments, twisted most often completely out of context by the press, political foes, and even members of his executive circle in the Villa, to get off the front pages of the press. Therefore, he may want to have some additional space in time, prior to having the furor over AFRICOM back on the front burner. We understand that he remains nervous about his election tribunal issues which are upcoming, and January 23 press reports show that the tribunal has allowed both former Vice President Atiku and former Presidential candidate Buhari to amend their petitions on the election and their accusations of fraud. Yar'Adua may wish to see this entire election issue behind him with a final resolution to his legitimacy prior to having the AFRICOM COCOM visit. That being said, he may get buoyed by the Davos Summit and other discussions the Mission will have with him in early February to reconsider this issue as he also promised the Ambassador a working meeting with her and her team sometime in early February. On Pfizer, the DCM will be raising the issue in her meeting this week with the Deputy Governor in Kano during a swing through the region for MLK events, and we will continue to push for a meeting with the Federal AG.

SANDERS